

Evidentiary Document No. 5370.

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AFFIDAVIT OF THAKIN SA

I, Thakin Sa, trader, Yenangyaung, now residing at House No. 156, 47th Street Rangoon, solemnly affirm and state as follows:-

For some years before the Japanese occupation of Burma, I had been associated with labour movement in oil-fields area and had taken part in many activities intended to improve the condition and status of labourers in that area and elsewhere in Burma.

The Japanese Army, in July 1942, began to recruit labourers in Burma for work on the Burma-Siam Railway project. It relied at first on specious propaganda for the success of its recruitment. High rewards were promised; good food, good living conditions, ample clothings and good medical treatment while at work were promised; and the recruits were definitely told that they would not be required to serve more than three months at the project. Consequently, recruitment was at first fairly successful

But when the first few batches of labourers were not sent back at the end of the stipulated three months and when those who escaped the vigilance of military guard set over them came back with stories of ill-treatment at work, of scanty food and clothing supplies at the camp and total neglect of the sick and ailing, further recruitment on a voluntary basis became impossible. The Army on this resorted to press-gang methods. Units of the Japanese Army stationed at different parts of Burma seized persons they thought suitable and took them under military escort to the labour camp at Thanbyuzayat. People of all sorts and conditions were taken in this way, while they were about on their legitimate business. The agency of the civil police force, at whose head was a Japanese Officer nominated by the Army, was also employed. Persons whom the local police officers considered a source of trouble were seized; people who had incurred the displeasure of civil and military administrations as also persons who were thought to be disaffected with the Administration were taken into custody and pressed into the labour force. Some of them were kept detained in custody for some time before being sent away to Thanbyuzayat. The provisions of Rule 38 of the Defence of Burma Rules made by the lawful Government of Burma under the Defence of Burma Act, 1940, was freely mis-used in respect of persons who escaped from the press-gangs or from labour camps.

In spite of strict censorship maintained by the Army and the civil administration set up by the Army, discontent in the country became vocal and could no longer be ignored towards the end of 1942. [A] conjoint Board of five Japanese representatives and five representatives of the Burmese administration was set up to allay discontent with the methods

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of recruitment and with labour conditions at the camps. The Burmese Administration was also permitted to have Burmese Officer at Thanbyuzayat and at labour camps to look after the interests of labourers. In pursuance of this scheme, I was appointed a Superintendant of Labour at Thanbyuzayat. I held that post from 27th December, 1942, to 31st. March, 1944.

When I arrived at Thanbyuzayat, there were about 7000 Burmese nationals at work at various camps on the railway project. In January, 1943, the Army asked for a further force of 16600 labourers. It was then also stated on behalf of the Army that the labourers would not be retained at work beyond three months of their arrival; and it was also stated that the arrival of these new labourers would enable those who had been at work since the first recruitment to be released. Between 18th January, 1943, and 8th March, 1943, about 9000 labourers arrived at Thanbyuzayat. It was reported that there had been many escapes on the way in spite of vigilant guard set over the recruits. [It may be stated here that none of the former 7000 odd or of the present 9000 odd labourers was discharged as having completed their term of service. Only such as were completely used up physically and who could not be employed any further were allowed to go back and many of them died on their way home.

Living accommodation provided for labourers at the camps were insufficient and insanitary. The area where the work had to be done was very damp and labourers had to live in barracks which could not keep out the wet. Barracks intended for 150 persons had to house as many as 300. Clothing shortage was acute; when the clothes which the labourers brought from home began to fall into rags, gunny bags were supplied to them to do duty both as wearing apparel and as blankets. No change of clothing was available to most of the labourers and none was provided by the Army. The result was that the clothings of almost all labourers were crawling with vermin and most of them were suffering from a virulent type of skin disease. Food supply was not sufficient; and the rice supplied was weevilly.

Water supply in this area was a carrier of malaria; but steps were not taken to sterilise the water supply except for a pretence at boiling the water for potable purposes. Medical supply consisted only of quinine and even this was not in sufficient quantities. Cholera broke out soon in the camps and the Japanese sought to combat the spread of this epidemic by cremating the dead and very often persons whom they considered incurable. There were many authentic cases of live cremations.

Labourers were treated as slaves. Whips and sticks were freely used on the labourers; and sickness ordinarily was no excuse.

There was a total lack of system in allotment of labourers to the various camps. As the labourers arrived at Thanbyuzayat, they were either driven up in lorries or taken marching through the camps. Officers in charge of the camps would pick out persons they wanted; families became separated, the husband being retained in one camp and the wife sent to another camp, the parents going to one camp and the children to other camps. Labourers who were sent from one camp to attend one of the few hospitals then maintained along the route were not exempt from being taken into any other camp. This lack of system and the haphazard manner in which the labourers were taken into different camps made it impossible to trace the labourers later. Many cases had been known of families then separated never coming together again. It may be noted that some of the camps are as far as 154 kilometres away from Thanbyuzayat.

In theory, age limits for recruits to the labour force were 14 and 45; but, in practice, labourers range in age between 12 and 60. A fair proportion of the labourers were women; some of them came with their husbands and others came with relatives or friends from the same local areas. In most cases, they were separated through haphazard selection of labourers at the camps from their husbands, relatives or friends. They suffered a good deal of molestation from the Japanese Army personnel; and reports made to senior officers were lightly dismissed as a rule. A report once made through the Burmese officer in charge of labour of a charge of rape against two Japanese soldiers met with a rebuff from Captain Fujino, who was then in charge. His reply was that Japanese soldiers were not capable of such impropriety and that the Burmese officer should not appear to encourage frivolous reports against the Army. The molestation of women labourers did not abate till after July, 1943, when the Army authorities imported about 300 prostitutes to serve the Army personnel engaged on the project.

About the end of March, 1943, the Army authorities at Thanbyuzayat issued a statement that out of 7000 labourers received before January, 1943, and of 9000 labourers received by 8th March, 1943, 5000 only were effectively at work. The difference between 16000 and 5000 were sought to be accounted for by illness, death or desertion. We were told that the Army must have another 30000 labourers and we were directed to report accordingly to the Burmese Administration at Rangoon. The Army at the same time issued a directive to the local civil administration at Moulmein that pending the arrival of the labourers to be collected on country-wide basis by the Central Burmese Administration at Rangoon, Moulmein area must supply within five days 7000 labourers. Intensive press-gang methods followed this order in Moulmein district. Between the months of April and July, 1943, approximately 30000 labourers were sent by the Burmese Administration at Rangoon to Thanbyuzayat. This was the last recruitment

to what was known as the "Sweat Army".

The name "Sweat Army" had earned such notoriety that it was decided to rename the labour force, which was known thereafter as Labour Service Corps., though now and again the term "Sweat Army" was still used in correspondence.

The authority of the Burmese Superintendent and Supervisors was small. The Army was very jealous of what it appeared to consider interference with their prerogatives by Burmese officers. The latter were not allowed free access to the labourers and were not allowed to maintain independent records. Once the labourers arrived at the camps, all records relating to them were kept by the Japanese authorities. Such records were highly unreliable; in the first place, the number of deaths were minimised, as each death at work meant a payment of compensation to the dependants; and lastly, the records were slipshod.

We did our best to improve living, food and working conditions; and by the time the road was open, the conditions had improved a good deal. But, even at the best, these were very bad. Flogging of labourers, punishment by exposing them to the sun tied to trees and starving them used still to be resorted to. There also was another practice indulged in by petty officers of the Army, resulting in illicit gain to them. These officers would keep back twenty per cent of the wages due to the labourers, as security for their good behaviour. It was professed that this sum would be paid to the labourers on their discharge; but very few labourers were discharged. Moreover, labourers were very often transferred from one camp to another, and the Japanese officers also used to be transferred quite as often. One officer succeeding another would profess to know nothing of the deposits with the previous officer; and labourers transferred had no means of making their claims.)

(Signed) Thakin SA
late Labour Supdt.

Identified by me:-

(Signed) E. Maung)
Advocate-General
Burma.

Affirmed before me, this 1st. day of August, 1946.

(Signed) ?
District Magistrate,
Rangoon.

Seal of the Court of the District Magistrate
Rangoon. 1/8/46.

書據書類五三七〇

現在「ラングーン」四十七番街第百五十六號館居住
ノ「エナングアウング」商タル私、「ターキン・サ
ー」ハ宣誓ヲ爲シ、嚴肅ニ左ノ通り證言ス。

日本陸軍ハ一九四二年七月ニ泰緬鐵道工事作業ノ
爲「ビルマ」ニ於テ勞働者ノ募集ヲ開始シマシタ。
其ノ募集ノ成功ヲ期セントシテ日本軍ハ最初ハ、尤
モラシイ宣傳ニ依存シマシタ。商務印書館
タ、就業中ハ良キ食事、良キ生活、健康、充分ナ衣類
及ビ良キ醫療待遇等ガ約束セラレマシタ。ソシテ應
募者等ハ此ノ工事ニ三ヶ月間在留スルガ必要ハナイ
ト明確ニ言ハレマシタ。從ツテ最初ハ募集モ可ナリ
成功デアリマシタ。

然シ乍ラ最初ノ敍組ノ勞働者ガ其ノ規定ノ三ヶ月
ノ末ニ歸ラサレナクナツタ時又彼等ニ對シテ設置セ
ラレタ陸軍警備隊ノ監視ヲ逃レタ人々ガ戻ツテ來テ
就業中ノ劣惡ナ待遇、收容所ニ於テノ貧弱ナ食事ヤ
衣類ノ補給又ハ病弱者ニ對スル甚ダシイ等閑等ノ話
ヲシタノデ任意主義ノ爾後ノ募集ハ不能トナリマシ
タ。陸軍ハ茲ニ於テ強制募集ノ手段ヲ執リマシタ。
「ビルマ」ノ各地ニ駐屯シタ日本陸軍ノ諸部隊ハ適
當ダト認メタ者ヲ捕ヘテ陸軍ノ護衛ノ下ニ彼等ヲ、
「タンビユザヤット」ノ勞働者收容所ニ連行シマシ

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2.

タ。凡ユル種類及状態ノ人ガ其ノ適法ナ業務ニ服シ
テキル時此ノ様ニシテ連れ去ラレマシタ。軍ニ依ツ
テ任命セラレタ日本將校ヲ長トスル普通警察隊ノ代
行機關ガ亦使用セラレマシタ。地方警察官ハ問題ノ
測源ト思料セル者ヲ捕ヘマシタ。文武管理ノ不快ヲ
招イタ人々及ビ此ノ管理ニ對シテ不満ヲ抱イテキル
ト思料セラレタ人々ト同様ニ監護ニ移サレソシテ勞
働除ニ押籠メラレマシタ。彼等ノ内ノ或ル者ヘ「タ
ンビユザヤット」ニ送致セラレル迄暫時監護所ニ抑
留セラレマシタ。一九四〇年ノ「ビルマ」防衛法ニ
基イテ適法ナ「ビルマ」政府ニ依ツテ制定セラレタ
「ビルマ」防衛規則ノ第三十八條ノ規定ヘ此ノ強制
募集又ハ勞働者收容所カラ逃避シタ人々ニ關シテ自
由自在ニ濫用セラレマシタ。

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3.

五人ノ日本側代表ト五人ノ「ビルマ」政府側代表カラ成ル連合會議ガ募集方法ト收容所ノ勞働條件トニ關スル不平ヲ緩和スル爲メニ設置セラレマシタ。「ビルマ」政府ハ又「タンビユザヤット」ト勞働者收容所トニ勞働者ノ面倒ヲ見ル爲メニ「ビルマ」ノ官吏ヲ駐在セシメルコトヲ許サレマシタ。此ノ計畫ニ從ツテ私ト「タンビユザヤット」ハ勞働監督官ニ任命セラレマシタ。私ハ其ノ職ニ一九四二年十二月二十七日カラ一九四四年三月三十一日迄就イテキマシタ。

私ガ「タンビユザヤット」ニ到着シタトキニハ其處ニハ「ビルマ」人ガ約七千人鐵道工事ノ爲メ諸所ノ收容所ニ在ツテ作業ニ服シテ居リマシタ。

一九四三年一月ニ軍ハ更ニ一萬六千六百名ノ勞働カラ要請シマシタ。同時ニ勞働者ハ其ノ到着カラ三ヶ月以上ハ作業ニ引合メラレナイトイフコトヲ算ニ代ツテ述べラレマシタ又此等ノ勞働者ノ到着ハ第一次ノ募集以來作業ニ服シテキタ者ヲ解放セシメルト述べラレマシタ。一九四三年一月十八日カラ同年三月八日迄ノ間ニ約九千人ノ勞働者ガ「タンビユザヤット」ニ到着シマシタ。――

従前ノ七千余人又ハ今次ノ九千余人ノ勞働者ノ内デ誰一人其ノ奉仕ノ期間ガ満了シタト云フノデ放免セラレタ者ハ無カツタコトヲ茲デ述べ得ルノデ

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アリマス。只肉体的ニ益ク衰消セラレタトイフヤ
ウナ者ヤ此レ以上便役セラレルコトノ不能ナ者ノ
ミガ歸還ヲ許サレマシタ。而シテソレ等ノ多クハ
歸還ノ途中死亡シマシタ。

労働者ノ爲メニ収容所ニ設ケラレタ生活施設ハ
不充分デアリ、非衛生的デアリマシタ。此ノ作業
ニ従事スベキ地區ハ極メテ濕氣ガ多クテ労働者ハ
濕氣ヲ遮断スルコトノ不能ナ廠舎ノ中ニ生活シナ
ケレバナリマセンデシタ。百五十人ヲ収容スル爲
メニ作ラレタ廠舎ハ三百人モノ多寡ヲ収容シナケ
レバナリマセンデシタ。衣類ノ不足ハ甚シク労働
者ガ家カラ持参シタ衣類ガ繼續トナリカケルヤ麻
袋ガ着用衣類ト毛布ノ兩方ノ役目ヲ立テルヤウニ
彼等ニ提供セラレマシタ。労働者ノ大部分ニハ着
替ヲ求メルコトハ出来ナカッタシ、軍カラハ何モ
給與セラレマセンデシタ。其ノ結果殆ンド全部ノ
労働者ノ衣類ニハ蚤、虱等ガウヨウヨシテキテ彼
等ノ大部分ハ悪性ノ皮膚病ヲ患ツテキタコトデア
リマシタ。食物ノ供給ハ不充分デアリ供給セラレ
タ米ニハ蠶象虫ガツイテキマシタ。

此ノ地區ノ給水ハマラリヤノ傳播者デアリマ
シタ。然シ此ノ給水ヲ殺菌スル處置ハ執ラレマセ
ンデシタガ例外トシテ飲料用ノ爲メ申請的ニ水ヲ

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消毒スコトヘアリマシタ、消毒品ハ只「キニーネ」
ダケデアリ、之トテモ充分ノ量ヘアリマセンデシ
タ。間モテク此ノ收容所内ニ「コレラ」ガ發生シ
マシタ。日本側ハ死者及ヘ救治シ難シト認メタ看
ヲ屢々火葬スルコトニヨツテコノ疫病ノ傳播ニ強
抗セント試ミタノデアリマシタ。信憑スルニ足ル
生着火葬ノ事例ハ多々アリマス。

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労働者ハ奴隷トシテ取扱ハレマシタ。更ト棍棒トハ
労働者ノ上ニ自由自在ニ使用セラレマシタ。ソシテ
病氣ハ普通ニハ「免責」ノ一理由トハナリマセンデシ
タ。

労働者ヲ該所ノ收容所ニ割當テル爲メノ組織ハ全
クアリマセンデシタ。労働者等ガ「タンビユザット
」ニ到着シタ時ニハ彼等ハ賃車ニ載セラレテ選
バレタカスハ收容所マデ歩行ノ儘送レテ行カレマシ
タ。收容所ノ掛官ハ其ノ欲スル者ヲ抜キ取ルノガ常
デアリマシテ夫ハ或ル收容所ニ留メラレ妻ハ他ノ
收容所ニ送ラレ親類ハ或ル收容所ニ赴キ子達ハ他ノ
收容所ニ赴クトイフ風ニ家族ハ散リ散リバラバラニ
ナリマシタ。當時道路ニ沿ツテ設ケラレテキタ少敷
ノ病院ノ中ノ一ツニ通フ爲ニ或ル一ツノ收容所カラ
派遣セラレタ労働者等ハ他ノ收容所ヘ追レ去ラレナ
イト云フコトカラハ見レテカツタ。組織ノ此ノ缺如
ト労働者ガ様々ノ收容所ヘ送レテ行カレタ所ノ出處
目ナ万法ハ爾後労働者ヲ尋ネ出スコトヲ不能ナラシ
メマシタ。其ノ當時分離セラレテ再ビ邂逅シナカツ
タト云フ家族ノ事例ハ澤山知ラレテキマス。收容所
ノ或ルモノハ「タンビユザット」カラ百五十四キ
ロモ遠ク離レテキル事ヲ附ケ加ヘテ置キマス。

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理論上勞働者ノ年齢ノ限度ハ十四歳乃至四十五歳デアリマシタガ實際ニ於テハ勞働者ノ年齢ハ十二歳乃至六十歳デアリマシタ。勞働者ノ相當多クノ部分ハ婦女デアリマシテソノ莫ル者ハ夫ト共ニ又他ノ者ハ親戚又ハ同ジ地方カラノ友人ト共ニ参リマシタ。大抵ノ場合彼等ハ收容所ニ於テノ出鱈目ナ人選ノ爲ニ、夫、親戚又ハ友人カラ引離サレマシタ。彼等ハ日本軍人ヨリ相當迫害ヲ受ケマシタ。ソシテ上級村長ニ對シテ爲サレタ報告ハ原則トシテ簡單ニ却下セラレマシタ。管テ勞働係ノ「ビルマー」人掛官ヲ經テ二名ノ日本兵ニ對スル強姦罪ニツイテノ報告ハ當時責任者デアツタ所ノ藤野大尉ニヨツテ劍モホロロニ振ハレマシタ。彼ノ回答ハ日本軍人ニハ此ノヤウナ破廉恥行爲ハ出來ルモノデハナイトイフ事及ビ「ビルマー」ノ官吏ハ軍ニ對スル歸順々々シイ報告ヲ疑問スル風デアツテハナラナイト云フ事デアリマシタ。婦女勞働者ニ對スル迫害ハ此ノ工事ニ從事シテキタ軍職員ニ奉仕スル爲ニ軍當局ニヨツテ約三百名ノ産業婦ノ移入サレタ一九四三年七月過迄ハ止ミマセンデシタ。

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一九四三年三月末頃「タンビユザヤット」ノ軍當局ハ聲明ヲ發シテ一九四三年一月以前ニ受入レラレタ勞働者七千名ト同年三月八日迄ニ受入レラレタ勞働者九千名トノ内値ニ五千名ノミガ有效ニ作業ニ服シテキルト述べマシタ。一万六千名ト五千名トノ此ノ差ハ病氣、死亡若クハ逃走ニヨルモノト算定サレマシタ。私連ハ軍ガ更ニ三万名ノ勞働者ヲ要求シテキルト聞カサレマシタ。ソシテ私連ハ其ノ旨「ラングーン」ノ「ビルマ」政府ニ對シテ報告ヲスルヤウニ指示セラレマシタ。軍ハ之ト同時ニ「モールメイン」ノ地方民事政府ニ對シテ指令ヲ發シマシタ、即チ「ラングーン」ノ中央「ビルマ」政府ニヨツテ全目的意識ニ於テ徵募セラルベキ勞働者ノ到着迄「モールメイン」地區ハ五日以内ニ七千名ノ勞働者ヲ供給セズベナラナイト云フコトデアリマシタ。此ノ命令ニ從ツテ「モールメイン」地方ニハ強硬ノ強制募集ガ行ハレマシタ。一九四三年ノ四月乃至七月ノ間ニ約三萬名ノ勞働者ガ「ラングーン」ノ「ビルマ」政府ニヨツテ「タンビユザヤット」ニ送ラレマシタ。之ハ「流汗軍」トシテ知ラレテキタモノニ對スル最後ノ募集デアリマシタ。

「ビルマ」側ノ監督官ヤ監督ノ權限ハ小サイモ

PURL: <http://www.legal-tools.org/doc/35a2f0/>

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10.

際ニ文拂ハレルノダト公言セラレマシタ。然シ放
見セラレタ身側者ハ還メテ小使デアリマシタ。其
ノ上身側者ハ頻々トシテ一ツノ使答所カラ他ノ使
答所ヘ移サレマシタ、ソシテ又ト同ジ位ニ日本ノ
將校モ居タモサレルノガ信例デアリマシタ。在任
將校ハ前任將校ハノ預ケ金ノコトハ何モ知ラナイ
ト主張シ、移動サセラレタ身側者ニ其ノ取次ヲ
スベキ手取ヘアリマセシデシタ。